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ABSTRACT

The actual nature of topicality as it is presented in intercollegiate debate rounds has become so split that there are two different types of topicality. The first type (T1) is a "real" argument that is subjective, intentional, absolute, jurisdictional, pragmatic, and focuses on content and product. The second type (T2) is strategic, objective, partial, theoretical, and focuses on form and process. By voting on T2, since it is a mechanical device, a judge often never needs to decide the true T1 issue. Hence, a judge can vote on topicality and satisfy the internal need to limit the topic without ever really dealing with the heart of the issue. Possible remedies to this problem include: (1) externally applied mechanisms to shape topicality arguments, (2) cooperative endeavors, (3) significance as a criterion in the round where topicality is an issue, (4) resolutional justification/conditional counterplans, (5) counterresolutional disadvantages, (6) new standards, (7) dispensing with the resolution, and (8) topicality jihad, or hastening the polarization through hostile and antagonistic practices. (HOD)

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TOPICALITY$_1$ AND TOPICALITY$_2$: A QUEST FOR TRUE MEANING

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In one of the keystone articles of the past decade, Daniel J. O'Keefe posited the existence of argument$_1$ and argument$_2$.[1] While the appropriateness of that distinction is yet being debated,[2] a similar dichotomy seems useful in the area of topicality. In the course of explaining this dichotomy, we will first describe what we mean by topicality$_1$ and topicality$_2$, examine the implications of this bifurcation for topicality as an argument in intercollegiate debate rounds, and suggest future accomodation of topicality in debate.

Topicality is not a favored subject for scholarly discussion. Apart from its role in argumentation texts and high school handbooks, none of which tries to break new theoretical ground as a rule, the literature is scant.[3] This lack of explicit scholarship is curious given the preeminence given topicality in most debate rounds. Since topicality is supposed to be a precondition for other issues in the round, it often is argued and is occasionally the only issue in the round, recently replacing a good share of plan arguments. For an affirmative to drop a topicality argument generally insures their loss in the round; critics are often catagorized by their willingness to vote on topicality alone; affirmative teams establish reputations by their successful defense of cases which are topical by only the most Byzantine of strategies. Topicality has also become a political forensic football, with mandatory requirements of "best definition" or even catagories for cases (PSCFA, Phi Rho Pi). Debaters and coaches are endlessly inventive on topicality, promulgating standards on definitions, on context, on reasonability, and on resolutional justification. Some of these standards range from the vague, but ever-evoked "spirit of the resolution" to such esoterica as

temporal topicality or even horizontal versus vertical topicality. Parameters provided with each topic seem only to have spawned yet another catagory of topicality arguments rather than to have reduced the number of interpretations of the resolution. Gun shy, or perhaps guilt-ridden, affirmative teams may offer pre-emptions to topicality arguments.[4] Yet given this plethora of topicality argumentation, it seems odd that the major statements on topicality each year may be Tim Moore's lecture at the Arizona Debate Institute, a few quotations from handbooks and Louisville's affirmative case.

The lack of scholarship on topicality is, however, understandable given the emotional and prestige dimensions of the issue. Teams tend to be liberal on topicality when affirmative, conservative when negative and "Moral Majority" when running a counterplan. Coaches share this same schizophrenia depending on whether their team or someone else's team happend to affirm that round and can become quite emotional on the subject. Like the "meatball" disadvantage, topicality separates the avant from the neanderthal in terms of voting and, hence, judge assignment. Yet favoring liberal topicality standards places one in the role of Pandora. Even more risky would be the position of the seemingly gloating forensic director who publically discusses his team's strategy for winning topicality with a seemingly untopical case.

Another pragmatic reason for the dearth of topicality scholarship is the ephemerality of the issues. The universals in topicality seem limited, while the resolution or case specific issues are doomed to a short life and a limited audience. This is all the more a problem because topicality is at base merely a "proceedural" issue.[5] As such,

it appears far too esoteric to command academic respect. Forensics publications are often held in disdain in matters such as tenure; topicality articles might only compound the problem. We are left to fend for our theoretical knowledge of topicality in high school handbooks or one page judging philosophies.

But topicality is an issue deserving treatment. Not least is the pragmatic reason: the paucity of topicality articles limits the shared knowledge about topicality in intercollegiate debate. Individual debaters must gain their knowledge, beyond a mininimum base, in the round, with about the same felicitous results as those who gain other types of knowledge on the street. The wisdom thus gained is incomplete, biased and often learned only through humiliation.

Here we will wax anecdotal. After the 1982 National Debate Tournament, a debater who had a superior record, particularly on the affirmative, admitted that he never thought his cases were topical, but ran them because he could spend so much more time developing topicality arguments on his case than his opposition that he could always outpace them and so win with a non-topical case. Even after the case was no longer a surprise, the simple mathematics of research and preparation protected this superior debater from a topicality loss. Conversely, the next year, a team of debaters also of superior ability lost three of their affirmative rounds at one tournament on topicality despite the fact that their case was probably the most predictable, popular and down-the-middle of the topic of any cases then being run. They lost on topicality because, given their conservative case, they did not anticipate danger from such arguments and were outgunned easily by teams deep in topicality briefs.

It would seem that topicality has been turned upside down and the nontopical win the argument while the topical perish!

Given this situation, regardless of past scholarship in the area of topicality, much work remains to be done. But before that work is attempted, the current nature of topicality argumentation must be better understood. It is to this end that we direct our immediate efforts. We must make clear: it is not the abstract nature of topicality which we wish to clarify, but rather the actual nature of topicality as it is presented in intercollegiate debate rounds. It is this actual topicality which has evolved into the bifurcation mentioned above.

At this point we will suggest that topicality has become so split that there are indeed two different types of topicality. For purposes of this paper, and hopefully for all time, we will call these two types Topicality$_1$ (T_1) and Topicality$_2$ (T_2). Before we discuss the implications of T_1 and T_2 we must explain what we mean by these terms. We will attempt this explanation by contrasting the terms. Topicality$_1$ is a "real" argument; Topicality$_2$ is strategic. Topicality$_i$ is subjective, intentional, absolute, jurisdictional, gut-level, pragmatic, intuitive, salient, functional, actual, lay, generalized, accessible, inherent, and focuses on content and product. Topicality$_2$ is objective, interactional, partial, hypothetical, theoretical, strategic, counter-intuitive, abstract, techno-debate, meta-argument, expert, specialized, esoteric, contrived, and focuses on form and process. Topicality$_i$ is a pre-debate, pre-paradigmatic, jurisdictional consideration; Topicality$_2$ is paradigmatic and may be the focus of the debate. Topicality$_1$ voices a legitimate concern that the negative need not be forced to debate an affirmative

case not anticipatable under the resolution; Topicality$_2$ does not address fairness of anticipatability, but is strategic. Topicality$_1$ is a fairness complaint; Topicality$_2$ is a "time suck" for the affirmative. Even the point of argumentative fruition varies. Topicality$_1$ is usually a constructive issue; Topicality$_2$ is salient in rebuttals. Topicality$_1$ is presumptively affirmative; Topicality$_2$ is not. Topicality$_1$ demands the involvement of the critic; Topicality$_2$ does not. And, recalling our anecdotes, Topicality$_1$ attempts to punish the non-topical team, while Topicality$_2$ attempts to punish the topical team.

Immediately we cover our heads against the volley of slings and arrows certain to be headed our way on the basis of the above statements. We acknowledge that our terms to not admit of nuance, but speak in absolutes to better show the contrast. Out definitions are descriptive in intent and only perceptually evaluatory; we identify both positive and negative labels on Topicality$_1$ and Topicality$_2$, although we admit we are not without prejudice ourselves. Before we are branded as reactionaries and ignored, please consider our individual sympathies. At the time when this paper was conceived and drafted, we were each very much involved with national-circuit NDT debate. We write this paper not as a jeremiahad, but in an effort to understand a cause of frustration and division in intercollegiate forensics. Indeed, we hope to postpone bitter argument on whether Topicality$_1$ or Topicality$_2$ is "better" until after we have examined the nature and implications of the two catagories, to which task we now proceed.

In the wake of increased topicality arguments, framers of the resolution have been on a quest to work a perfect topic which has often forced

us to play linguistic games for the better part of a year until the final round of the NDT puts an awkwardly worded topic to death. Despite this attempt to make intentions clearer and topics debatable, debaters have seized every opportunity to obfuscate original meaning and have instead paraded a circus of topicality arguments before our eyes--some narrowly limiting the topic, others broadening it to new extremes. As ever with sophistry, the clever succeed while the sincere perish.

The requirement that topicality be completely untrammeled to provide "intellectural freedom" is invalid. Every pursuit, except perhaps love and war, have rules which endeavor to provide fairness. In sports, the boxer's freedom ends long before he slips a horseshoe into his glove, keen though he may be to explore the device. Team sports are restricted by physical boundaries. And in the intellectual sphere there are a variety of limits which must be observed to gain certain awards and rewards. In intellectual competitions the limits do not curtail freedom of thought, but rather enable a precision of striving which is a prerequisite to excellence. And the goal of forensics is to encourage excellence in public decision-making, argumentation, and research. Yet the sole excellence T_2 develops is linguistic hairsplitting, which is of no value to any linguistic study outside debate. There is also the counter argument that a round void of resolutional limits thwarts the debater who wishes to explore the promised topic area. The debater can follow any intellectual line of pursuit she chooses out of a round; in round pursuits must be resolutional.

In some years we have seen the confusing situation where affirmative cases which were topical were not parametrical (atomic veterans on the

hazardous waste topic), and vice versa. We have also seen the boggling phenomena by which cases which were $Topicality_1$ topical were untopical by $Topicality_2$ standards (i.e. arguing a single country on a topic worded "nation or nations in the Western Hemisphere."). This situation somersaulted the ranks of those who will easily vote on topicality from the $Topicality_1$ adherents to the $Topicality_2$ afficionados, with confusion for all.

The $Topicality_2$ team often has its proverbial cake and eats it too. The $Topicality_2$ team can indict disadvantages for not being resolutional, or even argue that they are nonapplicable to the affirmative case because they ARE resolutional! The $Topicality_2$ team has been known to run the opposite of the resolution to stymie any predictable negative strategy and to force their opponents into hopeless contradiction. The $Topicality_2$ debate offers the continual challenge of ever more precisely honing the tortuous briefs which make possible the fragile and exotic topicality attack or defense. It occasions ingenious semantics, bionic leaps and minutia in the same subpoint, a continual fussing and tuning of the precise phrases. For some, particularly those long steeped in the mundane clash of the stock issues and the boring inevitability of end-of-the-world decision criteria, the $Topicality_2$ option opens new avenues of esoteric delight. The basics no longer engage the imagination of the $Topicality_2$ debater, and the burdens of researching yet another spate of arguments into oblivion pales beside the challenge of the $Topicality_2$ construct. Small wonder, then, that some of the most proficient teams and coaches in intercollegiate debate choose to devote their efforts and base their strategies upon $Topicality_2$. But to do well, really well, in this area,

requires its own monomania, requires exclusionary dedication. So Topicality$_2$ becomes an addition, if not a replacement, with its own delights, rewards and dependency.

However, the problems inherent in Topicality$_2$ mount. Pedegogically, Topicality$_2$ fails to teach about either definitions or substantive argumentation skills. It relegates topicality to a linguistic exercise which excludes the specific issue-oriented considerations of the given topic. While some argue that this clash has merit,[6] it often occurs at the exclusion of more meritorious considerations which debate offers. Strategically, Topicality$_2$ fails to reward planning and creativity, as tab room choices in judge assignment become the crucial indicator of success. Perhaps the most drastic consequence of the increasing use of Topicality$_2$ is that it forces beginning debaters and lay judges to become familiar with yet another genre of debatese. This results in fewer and fewer students participating in the activity as the task of researching an already broad topic becomes compounded by the necessity to be familiar with every single grammatical interpretation a resolution could have.[7] This further encourages the elitism which has recently characterized NDT debate. Continued reliance on Topicality$_2$ arguments could deal the activity a fatal blow as fewer and fewer schools are competing for bigger slices of the ever-shrinking NDT pie. At the very least, it could encourage the spread of "CEDA creep" which has already contributed to the death of a great many NDT programs.[8]

But perhaps the most ironic fact about the spread of Topicality$_2$ arguments is that they fail in their intended purpose--deterring the affirmative from running nontopical cases. What is the most common occurrance is that an affirmative team loses a round on topicality

because they dropped subpoint G of the standards which 1NR and 2NR claimed as voting issues. The lesson learned by the ballot cast on topicality was merely one of time allocation, not realistic case choice, which greately diminishes topicality as an intrinsically meaningful issue. Indeed, if such an incident happens frequently, it could have the opposite intent of original topicality arguments. Debaters could become so disgusted at losing T_2 with cases which are truly topical, that they begin running obviously nontopical cases to thwart such analysis.

Obviously, then, to stem the flow of this tide, some radical change to solve this problem is necessary. Optimistically we could assume that the thesis and antithesis of extreme $Topicality_1$ and extreme $Topicality_2$ would synthesize into a moderate $Topicality_3$. Pessimistically we see the radical extremes of $Topicality_1$ and $Topicality_2$ polarizing. When the bifurcation is complete and the center no longer holds what then of intercollegiate debate? Some handwriting is already on the wall: topicality issues decided by strike sheet rather than argumentation; reactionary critics; declining numbers in NDT debate; hostility toward what is increasingly seen as elitism in the activity; students frustrated because the issues in debate are not "what they're supposed to be;" coaches frustrated from the inconsistency in pedagogy and tournament success. While the new CEDA majority has claimed to purge itself of such evils, it lags only a few years behind NDT in development of full-fledged $Topicality_2$ arguments as semantical plurality invades CEDA debate.

Curiously, but perhaps predictably, there has been a militant reaction to $Topicality_2$. This "Right Wing" $Topicality_1$ branch is equally as extreme as its "Left Wing" $Topicality_2$ counterpart. The critics who inhabit the

Topicality$_1$ radical belt are self-proclaimed zealots who publically state their willingness to vote against any team which runs a case which they consider nontopical to the extent of doing so regardless of who wins the topicality arguments. Fortunately for the sanity of NDT debate, most of these ardent T_1 advocates have taken up the CEDA banner. A few even defend their willingness to vote on topicality even if the issue is never raised by the negative team! The authors of this paper deplore such prejudice! We consider this unilateral imposition of whim to exceed the worst excesses of Topicality$_2$, which at least allows for argument, even if the arguments are esoteric. To force a team to lose to the unaired, nonrefutable arguments of the supposedly neutral critic is indefensible.

We now proceed to delineate some possible solutions to this bifurcation debacle, though, the solution to the problem is not simple. On an individual or even squad level, many have much to gain from the topicality mutation. Debaters have gone four to six years without running a topical case; some have run the same case four years, regardless of resolution. (The fact that one who did so has become a Topicality$_1$ extremist is perhaps a telling comment.) But the alternative is the bankruptcy of an activity we all value.

Please consider the following options as our own versions of "modest proposals."

1. MECHANICAL DEVICES. These options are externally applied mechanisms to shape topicality arguments. Some have been implemented with varying degrees of success. As with any of our options, the greatest chance of success lies in widespread, optimally universal, adoption and adherence.

A. Changing the guard; or, resolutional alterations. As the resolution is the focus of the debate round so it can be the focus of change. Ideally the resolution would be worded so specifically as to

make topicality arguments a matter of brief illumination rather than lengthy extrapolation. The National Developmental Conference on Forensics indicated the desirability of this when they recommended "that Topic Selection Committees seek to reduce, as much as possible, the ambiguity of terms used in debate resolutions."[9] Unfortunately, experience has shown that even the most dedicated panel of resolution-worders cannot anticipate the ingenuity of hundreds of debaters working like beavers to subvert their intent. Steps could be taken to amend this lack of prescience. First, the framers could write a brief essay delineating their intent; this would clarify but would have little probably utility. We both have clear memories of Al Johnson of Colorado College explaining in vain that the affirmative case was not at all what the committee, of which he had been a member, had in mind. Secondly, greater input from field experts, debaters, coaches, linguistics, etc., could be sought to make a debatable topic.

Another option is the practice topic or the topic area. If a group of allied topics or one general area were debated for a period of months, and then refined, it would be strategically safe for the affirmative teams to develop only cases that would intersect all the practice topics or occupy the middle of the topic area so as not to be without a case when the topic was defined. This would also allow the topic committee to draft a resolution cognizant of the definitional pitfalls.

The resolution could also be adopted for a limited time. At the end of the time period the topic ballot would include the existing resolution in various rewordings. This second ballot could also offer new resolutions for the disgusted. The advantage would be to limit the typically broad resolutions or expand too-narrow resolutions (which can encourage T_2 by being overly restrictive); the disadvantage is the certain proliferation

of generics.

B. Guarding the perimeter; or, parametrical alternatives. The parameters are a prime example of a noble idea which did not come to fruition. Though the National Development Conference appears to have made the parameters short-lived, instead of beling eliminated, the parameter could be made binding and so indicated on the topic ballot. Instead of a single parameter, a trio of parameters could be offered along with each resolution and voted on by the membership. Or the now-binding parameter could be refined at set intervals throughout the debate season to purify the intent of the resolution. Alternately, the parameter could specify mandatory definitions of terms or phrases in the resolution, such as Black's Law Dictionary definition of "labor union" on the 1981-82 topic. The definitions could be from dictionaries or field context. This could reduce the endless quibbling over which definition might be reasonable, but would do little to reduce fringe definitional interpretations.

C. Inventory control; or, the mandatory case list. In November a list of all current or contemplated cases could be issued and the AFA membership could decide by vote which cases it deemed topical. This alternative could provide concrete guidance for topicality and "no surprises" but the permutations of cases which are nominally listed is inevitable. The popularity contest aspect of this alternative is also an unfortunate consequence.

D. A perfect 10; or, mandatory case areas. In 1977-78 the Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensic Association established a list of ten cases eligible for debate at the association sponsored tournaments. On a national basis this approach might prove workable, but the PSCFA was insufficiently mighty to enforce their exclusions. Conversely, an independent tournament

director hosting a sufficiently attractive tournament might specify either a case list or judging standards. Enforceability would be a problem; the practice might also increase bifurcation as teams are forced to comply or boycott, or invent a new standard of Topicality$_2$ known as "caseacality," crying "foul" when a case not on the list is presented.

E. A Declaration of Independence; or, case revelation. Traditionally one of the primary reasons to run the marginally topical or "squirrel" cases is the anticipated ease of voctory through running an unanticipated affirmative case. By forcing advance revelation of cases this advantage would be cut and presumably the cases which are topical only through T_2 argumentation would be reduced. In actual practice, however, the T_2 affirmative is now run all year and it's prior revelation is actually used as a justification in lieu of actual topicality as the affirmative team argues that the goal of topicality, anticipatability, has been met.

F. The Lock and the Strike; or, random assignment of judges. The tournament policy of random assignment of judges, long suggested for a variety of reasons, could well engineer an expanded meeting of the T_1 and T_2 practitioners. It could also expose teams to vindicative critics. More likely, the continuing elitist travel patterns of high-profile debate squads would be increased, and the recent deplorable practice of closed invitations and critic exclusion spread .

2. COOPERATIVE ENDEAVORS. We cherish little hope that any of these suggestions would be tried, much less succeed. The terms "cooperative" and "competitive" are so often mutually exclusive. Cooperation is probably the solution to a number of the unhappy practices in intercollegiate debate as it is in the real world, but a solution too often ignored.

A. "Getting to Know You;" or, pre-round discussion. Optimally, before a round begins the affirmative team would announce the case they proposed to run after which disclosure the critic would indicate his/her prejudice, if any. At that point the affirmative team could opt to change cases, and so announce, and the negative team could decide whether it would be productive to argue topicality and of which variety. Sadly, the ability of debate critics to be honest about their prejudices has not been notable. The gap between the ideal sentiments of the judging philosophy sheet and the actual decision criteria, or even the expressed and actual judging criteria reduce the viability of this option. Try as we may to emulate Professor Ulrich, it is a rare critic who is indeed tabula rasa.[10] We all pretend a lot about our biases; no one wishes to be known as a bigot, even if only a topicality bigot.

B. Debaters Decide; or, peer polling. As it is entirely possible that it is the jaded coaches who pursue $Topicality_2$ for their own amusement, this alternative allows the student to control his/her own destiny. Since debaters are ultimately the ones who do the arguing in a debate round, they should have a say in what arguments and cases they would prefer to argue instead of having edicts handed down from on high. Either on an interval or tournament basis debaters could be polled for their preferences. Debaters could then have input into the cases they prefer to research and debate. Negotiation over what constitutes valid topicality argument under the resolution should accompany such polling. This would allow debate to be more closely tailored to the interests of the students involved. The success of this effort would no doubt be undermined by debaters, who often thought up the weird topicality strategies in the first place, who simply seek to avoid strong affirmative cases, regardless of topicality.

C. Critic conferences. This option would involve an open discussion of individual biases and practices among all the coaches and judges at a tournament. This could provide a forum for information and also correct misinformation. Judges could express their suspicions about strike choices; confirm or deny their reputations; indicate their leanings on issues; suggest alternate strategies for securring their ballot. It could be illuminating or fall into the same problems as alternative 2A, exacerbated by peer pressure.

3. TOPICAL SIGNIFICANCE. The hoary old veteran, significance, has shared the hibernation of many stock issues. We suggest that significance can be used as a criterion in the round where topicality is an issue. In brief, a critic may decide that the affirmative case is topical semantically, but cherish doubts about the pragmatic topicality of the case. The issue of topical significance should be argued by the negative team as a way to reduce the advantage claimed by the affirmative to that covered by the resolution. In this way, extratopical advantages can be deleted. The definitional link between the resolution and the affirmative therefore become a limitation, not an extrapolation. A case which argued CPR courses as a means of "full employment" could thus only claim the benefits which accrue from the employment, not the CPR. The advantages of most T_2 cases would evaporate yet the critic would not be pressured to vote on the unfashionable issue of topicality. This also means avoiding the cherished issue of topicality as an absolute issue but allows a more pragmatic and hence, possibly more successful attack by the negative. The difficulty would be in resusitating significance and forcing it as a voting issue. The use of multiple counterplans to seize the extratopical advantages is an effective method to subvert non-resolutional mega-advantages. This popular

strategy also allows the first negative to avoid arguing irrelevant material. Should these non-resolutional mega-advantages be shown to be greater or more advantageously/less disadvantageously obtained without the topic as mechanism, it is appropriate punishment for those teams trying to slide through on rampant extratopicality.

4. RESOLUTIONAL JUSTIFICATION/ CONDITIONAL COUNTERPLANS. This strategy focuses around the resolution rather than the affirmative case. As with the question of topical significance, only resolutional advantages are considered; the disadvantages must be counter-resolutional. This mandates consideration of what is intrinsic to the resolution and not merely definitional. In practice, topicality is subsumed by the end issue of justification and becomes merely one strategy to demonstrate the lack of resolutional justification. Thus, an affirmative case may well be topical but fail to justify the resolution.[11] While granting definitions, a justification argument suggests that the problem outlined by the affirmative does not require adoption of the resolution for its solution. Counterplans conditional upon the desirability of the affirmative advantage are usually the most successful demonstration of this negative strategy. When judiciously approached, this strategy can allow a "Topicality$_1$ judge" to vote on justification and a "Topicality$_2$ judge" to vote on conditional counterplans in the same round; this feature is attractive as it avoids further theoretical bifurcation.

5. COUNTERRESOLUTIONAL DISADVANTAGES. The team is brave which argues disadvantages intrinsic to the resolution, but at most tangential to the affirmative case. Such a strategy exposes the negative "meatballs" to dismissal by the most profunctory 1AR comment. Yet a team willing to devote some effort to composing arguments supporting the validity of

such a strategy could well find themselves trounding an unprepared affirmative team. Although this strategy itself has overtones of exoticism, it is soundly based in hypothesis-testing theory. Although it canonizes the generic disadvantage, it forces generics to have strong and specific links to the resolution. This strategy sidestaps the typical topicality question, focusing instead upon the raison d'etre of the disadvantage.

6. NEW STANDARDS.

A. Strategic leverage. Already much used, this strategy uses the topicality argument merely as a stalking horse. When the topicality responses grant the disadvantages or the responses to the disadvantage grant topicality, then the desired result has been obtained and one set of arguments will be jettisoned. While this is undeniably a T_2 tactic, it is often an effective way to win a T_1 issue.

B. Required clash. As topicality is presumptively an affirmative issue, a requirement could be plausibly placed upon those debaters who would prefer Topicality$_2$ arguments on the negative to first clash with the affirmative definitions and standards before running the negative standards. Too often, debaters use topicality to avoid clash, so that negative teams run their generic topicality arguments every round. Two years ago, one coach was quoted as saying, "We take a look at a case and if our generics don't apply, we run twenty minutes of any=all." In such instances, 1NC often deals exclusively with standards and 2NC with definitions. Yet before negative arguments are accepted, they should be required to clash with any and all affirmative standards and definitions instead of blindly asserting their own. To the extent that T_2 is argued, it should be only as a vehicle for T_1, and not an end in and of itself.

C. T_1 and T_2 as standards. It is possible that our "modest terms," T_1 and T_2 will enter the forensic vernacular and will be articulated as standards for topicality. Rather than pretending to be "reasonable," each team could identify the type of strategy employed by their opponents and the teams could then debate as they do already. While this is a T_2 strategy, it would remove the pretense of really debating topicality that now exists and could focus the debate upon overt rather than covert standards for decision criteria.

D. Reasonable reasonability. Not only must a definition be reasonable, but, if reasonability is the standard claimed for the definition, the case as a whole must be a reasonable example of the resolution. Also, an affirmative which argues its affirmative case need only be reasonably topical should have to confront counterplans which are only reasonably nontopical. This end to the definitional double standard could easily have negative teams adopting the affirmative plan with only minute alterations.

7. DISPENSE WITH THE RESOLUTION. This idea has been previously articulated;[12] and is somewhat commonly practiced as the same cases and disadvantages resurface year after year. Changing resolutions is arguably analogous to reinventing the wheel each academic year. Perhaps the best means to test ideas is to allow each previous season's efforts to form a base for the succeeding season's debates. Perhaps we could simply dispense with the idea of a subject area resolution and simply debate resolved: "That change should occur."

8. TOPICALITY JIHAD, OR "LET THE BLOOD FLOW." Perhaps we offer bandaids where amputation is best. Knowing that the debate community is possibly already too bifurcated to pursue a course of correction, an alternative is to hasten the polarization through hostile and antagonistic practices.

Whetherthis will kill the activity or permit it to rise, phoenix-like from its own ashes, is unclear. We are not being entirely sarcastic in this remark. We both believe that debate is a compelling intellectual activity and will continue so to be. Current debate tournaments are only one operationalization of the need to argue and test ideas.

In this paper we have articulated T_1 and T_2. We see this as a bifurcation with the unfortunate consequence of judges voting on topicality arguments, not on topicality as a jurisdictional issue. By voting on T_2, since it is a mechanical device, a judge often never needs decide the true T_1 issue. Hence, a judge can vote on "topicality" and satisfy the internal need to "limit the topic" without ever really dealing with the heart of the issue. Such an occurrance is not easily remedied. Is T_1 or T_2 a symptom or a cause? We suggest it is both. And considering whether T_1/T_2 is a symptom or a cause or a serious malaise in inter-collegiate debate, we suggest it is both.

END NOTES

[1]Daniel J. O'Keefe, "Two Concepts of Argument," Journal of the American Forensic Association, 13(1977), 121-28.

[2]Wayne Brockriede, "Characteristics of Arguments and Arguing," Journal of the American Forensic Association, 13 (1977), 129-32.

[3]The minimal recent scholarship on topicality includes: Dan DeStephen, "The Development of Standards for Arguing Topicality," paper presented to the Speech Communication Association, Anaheim, California, November, 1981; Donn W. Parson, "On 'Being Reasonable': The Last Refuge of Scoundrels," in Dimensions of Argument, ed. by George Ziegelmueller and Jack Rhodes (SCA/AFA, 1981), p. 532-43.

[4]John K. Boaz, ed. "1978 National Debate Tournament Final Debate: Should United States Law Enforcement Agencies Have Significantly Greater Freedom in the Investigation and/or Prosecution of Felony Crime?" Journal of the American Forensic Association, 15 (1978), 23.

[5]Parson, p. 534.

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